

# SC FIELD NOTES

## South Central District

APRIL/JUNE 2004



Serving: San Antonio, TX Carlsbad, NM Albuquerque, NM Denham Springs, LA Dallas, TX  
Rolla, MO Little Rock, AR and Norman, OK

### FROM THE DESK OF **EDWARD E. LOPEZ** District Manager

Valued Employees and Stakeholders:

We hope you have enjoyed the many 'Spring Thaw' workshops that have been conducted throughout the district over the last couple of months. MSHA and many industry partners to include state agencies and grant recipients, and independent contractors and consultants all worked diligently together to raise safety and health awareness for mine operators and their employees. I would like to personally thank each individual who worked to set up the meetings, speak at them or simply attend them for making this initiative so successful.

Springtime is surely upon us and many will get out the old sports gear for fishing, boating, whatever, and begin the process of loosening up for summer. Please remember to take it easy in the beginning so as not to over do it. Also, please remember to keep safety and health in mind both at the job and the many warm weather activities you will endeavor.

I continue to marvel at all the improvement made by our community. It is obvious that our collective efforts to make a positive difference in Miners' Safety and Health are beginning to yield impressive dividends. Those dividends, simply stated are most valuable as they equate to fewer accidents, injuries and illnesses to all of us who make up the community.

Once again, I would like to thank everyone for working together to achieve our common goals.

April showers bring not only May flowers but also two Mine Rescue contests to the district. We are hopeful that many will attend and enjoy these events which are held in Carlsbad, New Mexico and New Iberia, Louisiana. Information for these events can be found on the MSHA Webpage. Here again, many dedicated people put forth grand efforts to facilitate the needs of these events. We need be thankful to these individuals and especially thankful to the men and women who make up our mine rescue teams throughout the district. They train hard to remain ready to aid someone in need. We appreciate their hard work and devotion and pray we never need their services.

Lastly, I would like to express my appreciation to all those who worked and attended our 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Joint Health and Safety Conference which was held in Albuquerque, New Mexico in March. The conference was very well attended by folks from all four corners of the district and beyond. Many participants stated that it was the very best ever. Personally, I enjoyed the learning experience as well as all the networking opportunities with our community associates. I will be looking forward to seeing each of you again next year in San Antonio.

May you enjoy a Safe, Healthy Spring!

Best regards,

E/.

## MEET OUR GREAT STAFF DALLAS FIELD OFFICE



Back, L to R: Supervisor Gary Cook, Jim Coats, Bradley Peay, Merle Nash, Steve Medlin, Ray Dubics, Walt Deloach, Willie Gill, and Mark Albrecht; Front L to R: Bernardo Guillermet, Mary Mitchell, and DFO Secretary Subritte Stevenson.

The Dallas Field Office Team has over 100 years of experience in the mining industry. Our mission -  
Helping you work more safely in the mining industry.

## LAFARGE SOUTHWEST, INC. LEARN ABOUT HOW LAFARGE MADE A TURN AROUND!

What happens when you have safety enforcement rather than a safety culture? People play "Fool the Enforcer" or nickname the safety manager Barney Fife and jokingly ask Barney the Safety Manager if he has that one bullet he is allowed for his gun! Safety enforcement results in the no-win situation where workers say: **"Watch out! Here comes the Enforcer, you better put on those safety glasses."** The goal in a safety culture is for the worker to say the following phrase,



"This could expose my eyes to injury.  
I'll put on my safety glasses."

Safety depends on individual decisions and actions, not on luck. One thing we must all remember is that people cause injuries and people can prevent them. Therefore, we must train and lead those same people into safe behavior. This is the essence of developing a safety culture-an environment in which people consciously seek safe ways to work.

**Lafarge Southwest, Inc. in New Mexico built a "Safety Culture and a Partnership with MSHA" and left the old "Safety Program" behind.**

#### **SITE SAFETY REPRESENTATIVE LEADERSHIP**

During the first year of building the safety culture in the New Mexico Division, the Safety Manager asked for volunteers to train and serve as Site Safety Rep's. These Site Safety Rep's completed MSHA certification training taught by Judy Tate and Elsa Roman, and a one-day course in presentation skills. A second group of volunteers were trained as Certified First Aid and CPR instructors. Yet another group of volunteers trained to become First Responders.



Site Safety Reps., workers, and staff at every level are continually immersed in the following six principles that are the focus of the

safety culture we strive to build at every site:

- **We believe that the safe performance of the job is always more important than the job itself.**
- **We will establish a culture that makes safety our highest priority and provides continuous self-examination as to the effectiveness of our safety processes and performance.**
- **We will provide a work environment that is safe and accident free and where all known hazards will be eliminated or safeguarded.**
- **We will provide the training, tools and resources required to ensure a safe and clean workplace.**
- **Every employee is empowered and required to discontinue any activity that is unsafe.**
- **Each employee will take responsibility for their personal safety, the safety of their fellow employees, and the safety of the communities we serve.**



**Jerry Millard, Albuquerque Field Office Supervisor, discusses miners' rights.**

## Culture Change

Changing the way people think about safety is not easy. A culture change is not a program, as programs by definition have a beginning and an end. They often are directed at manipulating people in some way to achieve an end result and can even be punitive. Programs are easy to package and sell to a region or division, but may not be flexible enough to meet the needs of that region or division. Culture change is a process that, once embraced by the people, brings about lasting change-change that is passed on. It is important to point out that culture change does not take place overnight. It can take five to seven years of continuous focus, hard work, and management participation and support.

## Results

Management, employees, and safety professionals feel the benefits of Site Safety Rep Leadership. These benefits include:

- **Employees are actively involved in planning and running their safety meetings, inspections, first aid, and annual refresher training.**
- **Workers compensation (self insurance) costs for 2004 were \$110,000 less than the previous year as a direct result of improved loss ratios.**
- **Employees are now recognized as persons with the authority to act on safety problems. Workers go directly to supervisors**

**or Site Safety Reps. with safety issues and solutions.**

- **Over the past two and a half years, 16 total MSHA visits have resulted in zero citations. This is an astronomical improvement, in light of the fact that we received more than 100 citations from MSHA in 1999 alone.**

## Challenges

Staying the course is the most difficult challenge to face. The goal is to change the culture rather than “put out fires” as they occur and this takes time. Lot’s of time. Expecting people to change their practices overnight is unrealistic. Commitment to and support of the six principles of a safety culture must be long term in order for them to impact the true culture.

There were many glitches along the way. Plants did not fully understand the needs of other departments while those other departments did not seem to understand ours. Conflicts resulted in tension. Step by step we learned many lessons-particularly in working cooperatively with our employees. We believe a safety culture is a positive, proactive culture with empowered employees who you can count on day in and day out.





Captain of Security, Mr. Kenny Gallegos holds the St. Barbara patron Saint of Miners that he carved.



Snapshot of the St. Barbara patron displayed in Mr. Gallegos security office.



**CLOSE UP**

## **POST FOUND In Block 1D Ore Body of the Molycorp, Questa Mine**

Molycorp started small scale, underground mining from 1920–1958. From 1965– 1981 Molycorp utilized large scale, open pit mining. In 1979, Molycorp started development of underground mining by utilizing the block caving method because of the weak nature of the ore and its natural ability of the rock to break up and cave.

In 2000 Molycorp started production in the D-Ore Body Block 1, which is directly under some of the old underground workings. This part of the D- Ore Body utilizes the block caving Method (Gravity System) where ore is drawn through draw raises on the extraction level and transferred to the Haulage Level via ore passes. The ore is hauled from the mining area in trains to an ore pocket and is transferred out of the mine by run-of mine conveyor system.

In the fourth quarter of 2003 a post was identified in one of the draw points during the production cycle of pulling ore through the draw points by the work of one grizzly chute tapper. It seemed odd to have a nice post with ore in the draw point. The post was pulled out of the grizzly line for evaluation to determine its origin. It was determined that the post had come from the old workings, approximately 460 feet above and was used as a stull for ground support reasons in those mining days, the post was estimated to have been underground for about 50 years.

The post was carved into a beautiful sculpture of a Miner by the Captain of Security Kenny Gallegos. This carved sculpture of the Questa miner was presented to the work force as an appreciation for all the hard work that improved Safety Performance. That presentation took place in February of 2004.

Kenny has since taken the remainder of the post and has carved a beautiful sculpture of St. Barbara patron Saint of Miners.

## 22<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL JOINT SAFETY AND HEALTH CONFERENCE



At the podium stands the Assistant Secretary of Mine Safety and Health, Dave Lauriski. He speaks eloquently and directly to the many faces attending the Joint Mine Safety and Health Conference about MSHA's goal in reducing accidents and injuries.

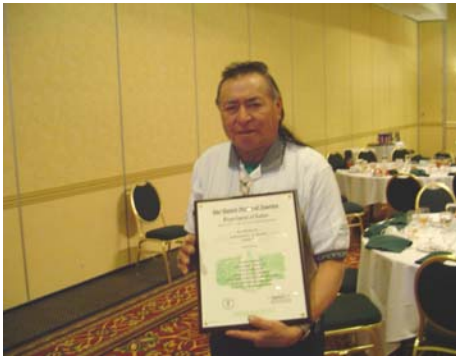


The Assistant Secretary, Dave Lauriski, presenting a "Large" check to W. Dennis Peterson, Vice President of Administration and Finance for the New Mexico Institute of Mining Technology. The check was written for the amount of \$138,633.00.



The Assistant Secretary, Dave Lauriski is photographed with the District Manager of the South Central District, Edward Lopez. Mr. Lopez addresses the Joint Mine Safety and Health Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico.





A proud winner displays his plaque.



Jonathan Hoffman and Sunny



Conference speakers.



Mitchell Adams-ADM with a stakeholder discussing safety.



These two pictures depict a successful conference. MSHA was represented with a beautiful display and a table filled with an array of helpful safety information. Professional MSHA representatives stood nearby to answer questions. During the banquet, the crowd waited anxiously for the awards to be announced and presented.

## MY CONFERENCE EXPERIENCE

Being the main contact in the office of the New Mexico Bureau of Mine Inspection, I found that the information that I learned at the 22nd Annual South Central Joint Mine Health & Safety Conference (phew) to be invaluable. It has allowed me to answer questions from the NM mining industry with confidence. Thanks for a wonderful, educational conference.

Pat Kolbenschlag



This is the last SC Field Notes newsletter that will include Mary Orozco (L), SCD Secretary. On June 30, 2004, Ms. Orozco will retire after 24 years of service with MSHA. She will definitely be missed by all of MSHA and those who have had the privilege of working with her. Congratulations, Mary! On the right is Anne Roberts, SI Unit Tech., SCD.